

LOVE-HUNGRY

The Story of a Pretty Girl's Search for Love

START READING HERE:

Forbidden to entertain her schoolmates at home, Hilda Barrows sought dangerous pleasures until the disgrace of a false murder charge led her to run away and become a vaudeville actress. She and Sarah, a girl from her home town, known professionally as Zaza, have an act, calling themselves the Russell Sisters. Zaza is wise in the ways of the world and gets Hilda into trouble and deserts her. Hilda, failing to get booking alone, turns to cabaret work, but this, too, is scarce. In desperation, she becomes a salesgirl, then a dishwasher. Losing this job she resorts to shoplifting, is caught and sentenced to a reformatory from which she escapes. She next teams up with Ben Rollo and they have a successful act. All goes well until Hilda (now called Betty Rollo) falls in love with Ben, but learns he already has a wife. He tells Hilda not to worry, and provides for her care. The baby arrives. Ben goes away for his father's funeral, and returns with his wife, Milly, who persuades Hilda to let Ben and her legally adopt the youngster.

But I hadn't been studying more than three weeks when I was taken seriously ill. I think giving up my baby hastened a breakdown.

For a long, long while I was in a hospital. After that the doctors said my nervousness was serious; they wanted me to go to some sanitarium and recommended one up in the New Jersey hills.

I did as ordered, and for four months I did nothing except walk about in the country or read books—good books of my own selection. I had become quite strong and well again, and was about to go back to my studies.

It was the last week in August! My baby had been born in September—only a few weeks more and he would be a year old. I had seen him but once since I had let Ben and Milly have him. I decided that I must see him—I decided that I would see him once a year at least. And I certainly couldn't miss his first birthday anniversary.

A letter to Milly brought back a warm invitation and I got ready to go to Galveston, see my little son, and then come back to New York.

The route I took was, according to the ticket agent, the most direct and comfortable one. It took me to St. Louis, where there was a short wait and a change of cars. Once again started on my way. I had some time tables and folders brought to me. I was growing more and more eager to see little Ben as my train crawled nearer and nearer to Galveston—at least, the train seemed to me to be only crawling.

As I studied one of the folders and noted a few stops I suddenly gasped—my train would pass through Fairview—my home town!

I noted the time—it would be about nine at night. How I wished it might be in daylight, and then I was glad it wouldn't be daylight, for some one might see me, although the train would speed through so rapidly as to make such a thing impossible. That night I had my berth made up early and crept in as if to sleep. But there was no sleep in me, I lay reading by the dim little light until nearly nine. Then I remembered that if I had a light I could be seen easily, so I put out the light, raised the curtain and sat staring out.

Soon I began to recognize places—we dashed through a little town and the light at the station showed the sign "Garford"—I shuddered. The last time I had been there was when poor John Baker was murdered by Dick Stuggart. We rushed on past a bit of silver lake

and a grove and great pavilion which was lighted—the pavilion where the murder occurred—people were dancing there—the murder had doubtless been forgotten long ago, as well as myself.

And then I recognized the bridge, the flats, the river front; we were coming into Fairview.

How I strained my eyes as we sped through the town! As I saw the station my heart thumped; and then out beyond the tracks I looked up a slight slope to where hundreds of houses stood in the moonlight, and from the windows streamed lights.

"In one of those houses up here—right up there in that cluster," I murmured, "are father and mother!"

Tears ran down my cheeks—tears of regret and shame and grief. If I had had the power to stop that train then and there, I believe I would have done so and gone home.

But we went on—the houses disappeared, dark fields appeared and I threw myself down and sobbed.

I felt terribly depressed, more so than I had for a long time past.

Going down through Texas, and nearing the coast, I heard rumors of a terrific storm in the Gulf, but it meant nothing to me. When I reached Galveston, however, there was great excitement. At the hotel to which I went I learned that the storm was doing terrific damage along the shore. It was so late that I could not go out to Ben's beautiful home so near the water.

As I thought of that—of the location of his home—I began to worry. I passed a sleepless night—every one about me seemed awake, there was running up and down the halls, and voices that sounded excited. By daylight I was up and when I got down to the dining room only a few were there, people's faces seemed strained—every one was talking to very one else.

This hotel was back in the city quite a distance. The waiter who came to serve me seemed as excited as the others.

"What has happened?" I asked him.

He stared at me in surprise. "You must of got in late Miss—didn't you know?" he said.

I shook my head. "I heard something about a storm in the Gulf—"

"Lordy, Miss—" he was a colored waiter, "that storm ain't only in the Gulf, it's in Galveston—yes ma'am—thousands is dead already!"

"Thousands dead?" I couldn't understand.

"Yes, ma'am, washed away—them big waves jest swept every-

thing—piers an' houses an' ships—everything!"

"Houses!" I gasped. "Not—not Oh, you mean the little fish houses and things?"

"No'm, I mean houses—big houses, hotels, rich folks' houses an' poor folks' shacks—didn't make no difference!"

"Is you got folks down on th' shore?" he asked.

Had I "folks" down there! My God! Benny was there, my baby boy! What if something had happened to him? Then I regained control of myself.



Finally I came across his name—just a swift glance—my heart stopped beating.

"Yes, yes, I have," I said. "But of course they will be safe." I laughed nervously.

The colored man looked at me rather sadly.

"I hopes so, Miss," he said and urged me to sit down and eat my breakfast. But food was out of the question. I left the dining room and tried to make arrangements to get down to the scene of the storm. This was difficult. Outside, people seemed crazy; they were rushing around, ambulances were hurrying here and there; in the lower part of the city, the water was rolling up, and for hours I wandered and struggled, and tried to learn something; everything was simply chaotic.

Finally I managed to find an in-

telligent man and talked with him. I gave him Ben's address and told him who Ben's father had been.

"Oh, that place!" he exclaimed, then he slowly shook his head.

"The place is gone, wiped out, inundated," he said. I felt myself reeling. He steadied me.

"But of course the people, your friends, got out all right—it is only a property loss."

"Then the people escaped?" I said hopefully.

"I'm sure of it—thousands of them got away."

This comforted me.

"Then they have probably taken refuge in a hotel or some such place," I said.

How I searched! I visited every hotel I could find; I went to the central places where the refugees and the lost were, I went to hospitals to look at the injured—and finally to the morgues—those temporary places where so many of the

—everything whirled around and around. But I steadied myself, I forced myself to read:

"Rollo, Benjamin."

"Rollo—infant son!"

Those were the lines. I didn't faint. I had suffered too much—it seemed as if I were dead and just moving around. I went to the place where the bodies were.

It was Ben—and—oh, God!—my little Benny! They had been found quite dead, the baby clasped in Ben's arms—of course—

Ben could have escaped, doubtless—but Ben wasn't that kind. He could have run for it, got away somehow—but Ben tried to save my baby boy—his baby boy—our baby boy—how my mind wandered on as I broke down and sobbed!

A man tried to comfort me. He asked who I was; I told him I was a friend. They thought I might be Ben's wife—she was also missing. This man, I afterward learned, was one of the lawyers who handled Ben's interests in St. Louis. Even then I couldn't tell him the truth.

But this lawyer arranged for the funeral. I remember every detail. What a hurried burial, what a short formal prayer! And then I realized the hundreds, thousands, of others that had also perished.

For a week after that I remained in my room. I didn't need a doctor—I needed just quiet and rest, and time to clear my mind and calm my nerves.

Now what could I do? I must have some money soon. There was no longer any beloved Ben to send me money.

I went to St. Louis and found his attorney. I put everything before him, that is, I told him I was the mother of the child that Ben had legally adopted.

"There is nothing I can do," said the lawyer.

"But Ben always sent me an allowance—he had so much—he felt that it was the least he could do when I had given up my baby to him and his poor wife."

"I know," said the lawyer, "and I appreciate your position. Morally you should have half the fortune, but you have no legal claim whatever—the child was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Rollo—and you can do nothing. If I had the power, if I had my way, I would provide for you, but I cannot—"

I nodded. He was right, of course.

A body had been found some time later and identified as that of Mrs. Rollo—it was buried alongside Ben and little Benny, and since Ben had no relatives, Mrs. Rollo's relatives were the ones to inherit. They had flocked about like a pack of hungry wolves, the lawyer said, and in good time the entire estate would go to them.

"Just before Mr. Rollo died," said the attorney, "it was time to send you another check. You are entitled to that. I shall give it to you, dated at that time."

And he did give it to me—and I have always believed that he stretched a point—that the check was not due until a week after the tragedy.

TOMORROW

Hilda starts out to reconstruct her world, to salvage what happiness she can from a wrecked existence.

No. 72—THE HOUR ARRIVES

By Sir Walter Scott

IVANHOE

Tomorrow: Rebecca Lacks a Champion

Drawn by Nicholas Afonsky



SYNOPSIS—Rebecca has been abducted and hidden at Templestowe by De Bois-Guilbert. The grand master learns of her presence and is told she is a sorceress. A trial is ordered, at which Rebecca demands right by combat and is given three days to find a champion. She sends a note to her father, Isaac, to find Ivanhoe, who departs immediately. Richard follows.

BOYS AND GIRLS—Save these "Ivanhoe" pictures and paste them in a scrap book. Uncle George will announce prizes to be given later for the best scrap books, colorings and stories based on this series. **SAVE THESE PICTURES.**